영어어문교육, 14권 3호 2008년 가을

Practical Tips for EFL Native Teachers and Their Employers in Korea*

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Choi, Yong-Son. (2008). Practical tips for EFL native teachers and their employers in Korea. *English Language & Literature Teaching*, *14*(3), 29-47.

EFL native teachers are constantly being recruited to work and this sometimes causes a number of social problems such as unqualified teachers, native teachers management, cross-cultural misunderstanding in Korea. In this context, this study aims at exploring EFL native teachers' perceptions about living and working in South Korea, by means of a qualitative analysis of data collected from "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal" over a period of 6 months (August 2006–January 2007). Various comments and remarks drawn from more than 300 school, college, university and language institute teachers regarding the working and living conditions of native English speakers teaching in South Korea were reviewed. A list of suggestions are developed for the job-seeking foreigner who wants to visit Korea to teach effectively and the study is also aimed to inform recruiters and employers of ways to increase job and lifestyle satisfaction for their foreign employees.

[EFL teachers/native English-speaking teachers/teacher research]

I. INTRODUCTION

There is an ever-increasing demand worldwide for knowledge of the English language. Opportunities abound for those seeking to become employed as teachers of English as a Second Language. For example, in South Korea, foreigners are constantly being recruited to work for private language and business institutes, elementary and secondary schools, universities and colleges, camps for children, government agencies, overseas corporations

* This work was supported by KIMPO College's Research Fund.

and in private tutoring due to the limitation of productive English language skills and the high demand for English by Korean EFL learners and parents.

As of October 31, 2007, the number of E-2 visa holders (native English conversation instructors) was 17,826 with gradual increase each year, according to Korea Immigration Office (2007) and by nationality, the United States accounts for the largest number, with 6,981 (39%), followed by Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, South Africa, Australia, and others as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

FIGURE 1

Total Numbers Increase of E2 Teaching Visa Holders in Korea

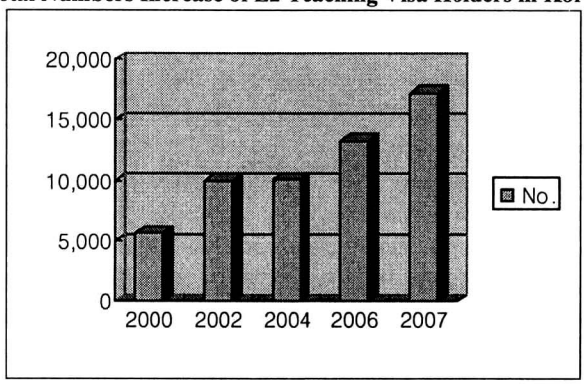
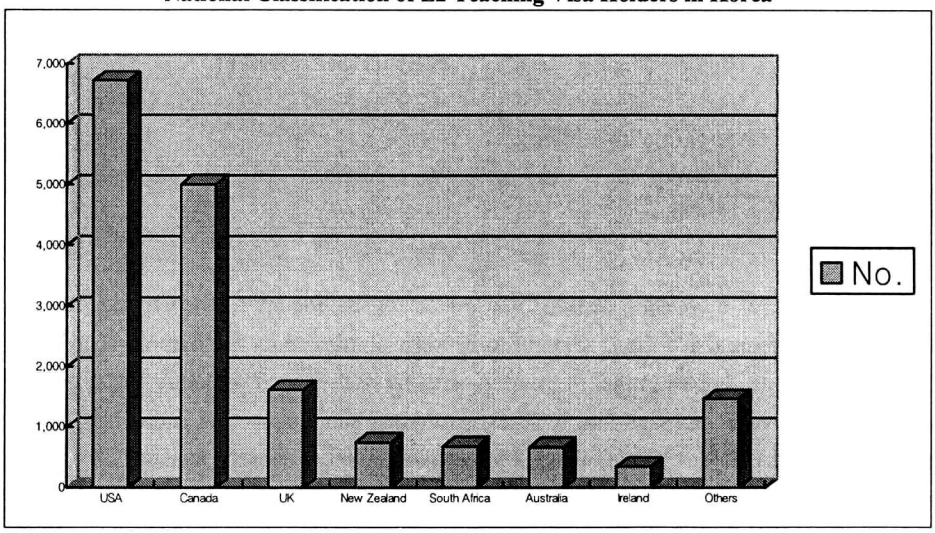


FIGURE 2

National Classification of E2 Teaching Visa Holders in Korea



Source: Korea Immigration Service (2007)

The eligibility for the E-2 visa applicants is well revealed in the following qualifications and experiences (GPOE, 2008) as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Eligibility for Foreign English Teachers

Pay Category	Monthly Salary	Requirements
Category 1	2,300,000 KRW per month	*Category 1-A* -Elementary, Middle, or Secondary school Teacher's Certificate -Minimum two years of full-time English teaching experience at accredited teaching institution(s) *Category 1-B* -Master's Degree -Minimum two years of full-time English teaching experience at accredited institution(s) *Category 1-C* -TESOL, TEFL or CELTA certificate comprised of a minimum of 100 course hours -Minimum two years of full-time English teaching experience at accredited institution(s) *Category 1-D* -Bachelor's degree in Education -Minimum two years of full time English teaching experience at accredited institution(s)
Category 2	2,100,000 KRW per month	*Category 2-A* -Elementary, Middle, or Secondary School Teacher's Certificate *Category 2-B* -TESOL, TEFL or CELTA certificate comprised of a minimum of 100 course hours *Category 2-C* -Master's Degree or Graduate Diploma (Program must be a minimum of 2 years in duration) *Category 2-D* -Minimum one year of full time English teaching experience at accredited institution(s) *Category 2-E* -Bachelor's degree with a major in Education (Education major must be clearly stated on either the diploma certificate or official transcript.)
Category 3	2,000,000 KRW per month	-Bachelor's degree* -No other certificates or experiences outlined in Categories 1 or 2 *This is the minimum entry requirement into GEPIK

Unfortunately, many first time travelers and workers to Korea with the eligibility stated above to South Korea, often arrive unprepared to deal with culture shock and uninformed about the realities which lie in wait for them upon their arrival. And, while many profess job satisfaction, others express disappointment. Therefore, for the job-seeking foreigners who want to teach in Korea, a list of suggestions have been developed as a result of this study, which is also aimed to inform recruiters and employers of ways to increase job and lifestyle satisfaction for their foreign employees. This will also help to draw conclusions on what can be taken into account to enhance the effectiveness of English language teaching by native speakers coming to work to Korea.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

English is the most commonly used language in the world. As it has become the language that provides access to higher education and job opportunities, and has become almost exclusively the language of diplomatic discussion and business negotiation, there has been a growing interest in hiring native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) in Asian countries (Jeon & Lee, 2006, p. 53). Cross-border education has been growing dramatically in both English-speaking countries and non-native English-speaking countries. While more and more students, particularly from Asian countries such as Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan choose to study in English-speaking countries, many native English speakers go to Asian countries to teach English (Han, 2005). Often, once the NESTs arrive in their host countries, they are overwhelmed by panic, asking themselves "What happens next? How can I serve my students' needs and earn my colleagues' respect?" Concurrently, schools and universities worldwide are preparing to host these English teachers, and are wondering whether these teachers will "be more than a native speaker" (Snow, 1996) and benefit their programs and students. For the benefit of NESTs in foreign countries, Barratt and Kontra (2000) surveyed reactions to native speaking teachers in China and Hungary and provided guidance for NESTs who plan to work overseas, helping them to prepare and shape their experience. The study showed some implications such as: a) implications for EFL administrators and colleagues (hire carefully, have orientation for new NESTs, make language lessons available to NESTs); b) implications for teacher educators (do not recommend unqualified students to be NESTs, teach about the varieties of English, teach about cultural diversity and acceptance, teach about EFL); c) implications for NESTs (learn about the educational context, prepare lessons diligently; learn about and respect the host language and culture, be humble). Jeon and Lee (2006) reported policies and practices that invite NESTs to Asian countries, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and

South Korea, and provided a few practical suggestions for the successful implementation of hiring NESTs in Asian countries: a) enhanced training of unqualified NESTs upon hiring; b) forming an Advisory Teaching Team consisting of both NESTs and local teachers of English in order to promote the collaboration between them; c) an in-depth longitudinal and cross-sectional evaluation to examine the extent to which the key objectives of the policy are being achieved, with the aim of evaluating the effectiveness of the policy.

In addition, some books are aimed to offer novice English teachers an introduction to teaching English abroad. Lindsay (2000) produced a helpful book for new teachers. It addresses basic topics such as language teaching, classroom management, planning lessons, and using textbooks. It also includes a variety of activities that new teachers can easily use in their classrooms. Snow (1996) provides a nontechnical introduction to English teaching that is geared toward the special needs of native English-speaking teachers working abroad. In addition, publications such as the following include chapters that address EFL situations in a number of countries. First, Lynes (1996) offers a wealth of practical advice for teaching English in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria. For each country, the author discusses how to prepare for living and teaching overseas, how to find a teaching position, and how to manage daily living concerns while teaching English. Most of the information is also applicable for other nearby countries. O'Sullivan (1997) discusses practical concerns related to teaching and living in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia and the Philippines. In approximately 20 pages for each country, the author discusses how to prepare for living and teaching in that country, how to find a teaching position, and how to manage daily living concerns.

Nowadays, there is a great number of NESTs who teach EFL in Korea as in this era of globalization. It is becoming more common for Korean EFL students to be exposed to NESTs' instruction in and/or outside the classroom. In fact, many NESTs are employed to promote Korean EFL students' English proficiency through EPIK (English Program in Korea) operated by the Ministry of Education. Within the extensive literature on EFL teaching and learning, however, comparatively little research has focused on NESTs' perceptions which can provide guidance for novice NESTs and teacher educators who prepare NESTs in TEFL. In spite of a lack of research papers, Choi (2001) examined the problems and effectiveness of EPIK through surveys and offered some suggestions for its improvement. Ahn, Park, and Ono (1998) compared the EPIK with the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) program. The study explored three questions; the problems that both the EPIK program and the JET program have had, how to utilize the native speaker teachers effectively, and how to improve the program. Chin (2002) explored perceptions of native English-speaking teachers in language learning and teaching in Korean EFL classrooms. The results showed that NESTs believed that language learning is learning

communication skills; Korean students view English as a class or a test rather than a language; class dynamics as well as cultural and educational systems adversely influence Korean students' EFL learning; group-oriented creative activities are popular among students; and studying and showing knowledge of the host language and culture are worthwhile. Kim (2001) surveyed 69 EFL teachers in Korea and investigated their motivation, attitudes, cross-cultural adaptation strategies, and educational backgrounds. The findings of the survey suggested that US EFL teachers lacked information and knowledge of Korean culture, and their attitudes and motivations for teaching did not meet with Korean learners' needs. The study showed that none of them had any teaching qualification.

On reflection of the government in 2005, the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development proclaimed "a Five Year Plan for English Education Revitalization," which would place an NEST in each middle school by 2010 (a total of 2,900 NESTs nationally), and maintain a "one NEST per school policy" at elementary and secondary school levels in Korea. In the long run, the government plans that each elementary and secondary school will have at least one NEST. However, as stated above, there were no well-recognized specific research papers or books with credible information on perceptions about living and working of NESTs in South Korea which could serve as a useful guide to NESTs and to those who interact with them in South Korea.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Each year, thousands of women and men from English-speaking nations go abroad as English teachers through agencies such as the Peace Corps or Voluntary Service Overseas, or through myriad other government, church, business, and academic organizations or on their own will. For these novice English teachers, the challenge of learning what to do in the classroom is compounded by the difficult process of adjusting to life in a foreign culture. Teaching English as a novice teacher in a foreign nation is very different from teaching as a trained professional in an English-speaking country, and knowing how to speak English is not the same as knowing how to teach English. Learning the craft of language teaching by trial and error can be a long process and involve considerable wear and tear on teachers and possible damage to students.

Despite the lack of research on EFL teachers' job satisfaction and on the socio-cultural aspects of their lives, some resources are available for study. For instance, the Internet, a global information and cultural exchange tool, is widely used by ESL/EFL teachers to conduct job searches and to share about their experiences of living abroad. Among others,

the Web site, "Dave's ESL Café" has become an important meeting place for ESL and EFL teachers worldwide to find out about overseas work conditions. By probing, through the website, NESTs' personal experiences associated with teaching and living in Korea, the researcher hope to construct a better picture of commonly-encountered positive and negative aspects of teaching EFL in Korea and suggest possible solutions.

1. Data Source: Dave Sperling's ESL Café

"Dave's ESL Café" was founded by David Sperling, who was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. Dave acquired his Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Pepperdine University and his Masters of Arts in Applied Linguistics from California State University in Northridge. Sperling spent nearly a decade teaching EFL in Japan and in Thailand before establishing within a short period of time his Web site, "Dave's ESL Café". As well, Dave Sperling is often referred to as "a man with a virtual passion" and as the leading pioneer in serving the needs of ESL/EFL students and professionals. His award winning Web site is renowned worldwide and gets over one million hits a month. This means that the site has enough objectivity for data analyses of this study.

FIGURE 3
Homepage of Dave's ESL Café (www.eslcafe.com)



The Web site, "Dave's ESL Café," provides ESL teachers with useful information related to teaching and includes a comments journal for teachers who have worked or are currently working in places such as Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America and Oceania. Its "Job Information Journal" expresses a variety of viewpoints by foreigners who have traveled and taught English in Asian countries such as Brunei, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan,

Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Tibet, Vietnam, and South Korea. It denotes that English is taught most extensively in Japan, Taiwan, China, and South Korea. Data from Korean Job Information Journal were collected for this study.

2. Subjects

This paper used the data from "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal" collected over a period of 6 months (August 2006 – January 2007) regarding the perceptions of NESTs about EFL teaching in South Korea. Various comments and remarks from more than 300 (almost equal number of male and female participants) school, college, university, and language institute teachers who identified themselves in terms of home country, gender, and work site regarding the working and living conditions of NESTs in South Korea were reviewed and analyzed qualitatively. Only the teachers who identified themselves by those standards were used for this study as demonstrated in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Participants Identities

Total		USA		Canada		UK		Australia		Others	
300		115		83		43		24		35	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
152	148	55	54	43	42	30	29	15	14	9	9

Out of 300 participants, the United States accounts for the largest number, with 115, followed by Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and others. As demonstrated above, gender does not play any meaningful role in this study.

3. Data Analysis

In Sperling's "Job Information Journal," foreigners comment extensively about South Korea's work conditions. In comparison with Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and other Asian countries, South Korea often rates poorly. Ominous complaints, warnings, and nightmarish stories are often told by people from all walks of life though many well- intended and touching stories are at times told. This study collected randomly 300 NESTs' postings from "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal" which included the stories of living and working experiences in Korea. The native teachers' comments and remarks (both negative and positive) obtained from 300 subjects were classified and synthesized according to different categories and sub-categories regarding their living and working conditions in Korea as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Categorical Classification with Rank Ordering of Native Teachers' Postings

Categories	Sub-categories	Percent	
Living	cultural differences, racial discrimination	16%	
	accommodation, location, surroundings	14%	
	leisure activities, social events	6%	38%
	others	2%	
Working	wage, contractual or legal problems, qualifications	19%	
	curriculum, materials, class size, students level	15%	
	disorganization, schedule, communications, in-service training program	6%	43%
	others	3%	
	Others	19%	

The focus of the survey is to identify the NESTs' most commonly recurring negative and positive experiences in order to develop a solid criteria for creating tips for the NESTs and their employers.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study analyzed the data qualitatively to create a list of questions for NESTs to ask potential recruiters and employers when conducting a job search, suggests ways for them to better cope with culture shock, and helps make employers and recruiters of NESTs more aware of their lifestyle and work-related needs. If properly used, this study will help enhance the effectiveness of English language teaching by NESTs coming to work in Korea.

1. Tips for Those Seeking Employment

Most NESTs undergo culture shock to some extent upon their arrival in South Korea. Therefore, it is important that they know how to constructively deal with stress. Although modern South Korea is influenced to some extent by Western culture, NESTs should keep in mind that it is an Asian country and that they will encounter important cultural differences, some of which are humorous, while others are not so easily understood at

times. Kim (2004) identified conflicts or difficulties NESTs encountered as novice instructors, both internal and external to the classroom settings of their host countries and the research findings revealed that the NESTs were not adequately prepared to cope with new and unfamiliar physical settings of their host countries, or to familiarize themselves with their new classroom settings and students. Studying the various conflicts which native EFL instructors encountered, both internal and external to the classroom environment, will hopefully shed light on, and provide a more accurate portrayal of EFL professionals' teaching overseas and may provide possible insights into potential solutions to them.

It was discovered that most EFL teachers who encounter difficulties adjusting to living in South Korea often fall into two categories: a) those who experience unexpected things like contractual and/legal problems at work and b) those who maintain a belief system that the world is safe and predictable. Based on findings of various comments on living and working collected from teachers' postings on "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal," the following suggestions were developed to aid NESTs prepare for the work in South Korea:

(1) While at home, volunteer in an ESL teaching program at your nearby community center or local high school to find out if you would enjoy teaching English as a second language.
(2) Increase your educational credentials by seeking professional training in teaching or by becoming TESL, TESOL, TEFL, ESL or EFL certified.
(3) Remain updated in your teaching qualifications and skills.
(4) Collect resources such as catalogs and professional books on teaching methodology, classroom materials and information on the basic principles of language learning.
(5) Start planning lessons which will cater to the specific language skills and cultural needs of those you are interested in teaching.
(6) Read books on how to deal with culture shock and on professional development opportunities.
(7) Explore Internet sites such as "Dave's ESL Café" to become familiar with new lesson plans, gain helpful teaching tips, locate discussion groups, lists of publishers, distributors, teaching jobs etc.
(8) Look into the diversity of English language institutes, where people can gain teaching experience.
(9) Collect information about work hours and conditions, salaries and the various types of students one may teach.
(10) Spend time studying your host country's culture and language.

(11) Learn to screen fraudulent employers and recruitment agencies from legitimate ones by requesting copies of their business licenses, inquiring if they are home-based and/or resume brokers, finding out where their main offices are located (e.g., in the USA) and about their base fees.
(12) The academic-credentials check has been toughened. The original degree, along with a copy of it, must be submitted. The original will be returned after the credentials are authenticated. The copy must be verified by the Korean consulate in applicants' home countries or the Korean Council for University Education (www.kcue.or.kr).
(13) New visa regulations require applicants to submit their criminal background check and health data, including HIV-AIDS and drug-test results.

1) Work Contract

Korea can be a remarkable place for people to acquire teaching experience. Yet, it is important to carefully read over employment contracts as in all contracts before signing and to ask employers direct questions about their work expectations, the student body, living conditions, and benefits, since these tend to vary from one place of employment to another. Also, it would be beneficial to interview a few current or past employees to find out their impressions about the work environment while maintaining awareness that their opinions may be biased and to sense if you would be able to work well with them, since getting along with coworkers is well regarded by South Korean employers. The following post is one piece of advice made by an NEST.

> *"As I read horror story after horror story on this and other sites, I often wonder why these experiences are so dramatically different from mine. I have a couple of theories about that: First, my director treats me with respect. This alone makes a lot of things more tolerable. Secondly, I researched the position before I came here, and didn't go through a recruiter. There are some things you can do to maximize your chances of landing in a good school or hagwon, but ELT in the ROK is still very much a crapshoot. Also, if nothing else, this posting should tell you that no matter how many questions you ask, there are going to be things that aren't what you thought they would be. This, of course, is just my experience. It isn't meant to be representative. Mainly I wanted to post a more or less balanced view of life as an English teacher. I'm not in love with Korea, but it has its good points. My job is good, but far from perfect. Some days I love it and others it makes me Get-me-on-the-next-plane-outta-here crazy. So to sum it up, my life here is ok. In Korea if you can manage that much, you're pretty fortunate."*

(quoted from one of postings from "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal")

2) Teaching

Often, first time visitors to South Korea teach at private language institutes. The following issues need to be inquired about the following of potential employers: a) the number of classes and courses you might be required to teach in any given day, week and/or month; b) their duration and length; c) their start and end times d) the number of students per class, their reasons for learning English and their academic goals; and, e) the types of resources, teaching materials and equipment available in the office for the preparation of lessons and in the classroom for teaching purposes.

Also, it is advisable to find out the following ahead of time: a) about the academic institute's management policy and goals; b) on what date and how you will get paid (e.g. in cash or by direct deposit into a local bank account) c) about overtime hours being mandatory or optional; d) if the classrooms and teachers' office(s) are heated and air conditioned; e) if any employees have ever broken their work contracts. And, if so, for what reason; and, f) if you will be entitled to receive a severance pay and a release form upon completion of a one year contract.

The following questions are worth asking: a) How are teachers expected to behave and dress during work hours?; b) What is the teacher-students relationship policy? c) What are reasonable goals to set for students' progress? d) What learning strategies and styles are students accustomed to? e) What teaching methods are favored? f) How long has the school been in operation? and, g) How readily can materials be duplicated? etc. The following is one experience posted by an NEST.

"*My boss is a decent guy. He is disorganized and more than a little crazy, but not violent, dishonest or backstabbing from what I have seen. Whenever I've taken a problem to him he tries his best to correct whatever is wrong. The main concerns I have with him are, as I stated, due to disorganization and a lack of planning. For example, more than once he has changed the schedule and forgotten to tell me about it. I feel it's an honest mistake, just one that happens all too frequently. His English is not great, and that has caused some misunderstandings. He genuinely cares about the kids and wants to make sure they are having fun and enjoying the program. Much less evident is whether he*

cares if the students actually learn English. I can't say he doesn't care; it is just not something that stands out to me. Six paydays have come and gone so far and each time I've been paid on time and in full, including the overtime. Twice I've asked for an advance and each time was told, Not problem!?" (quoted from one of postings from "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal")

To diminish the impact of culture shock and integrate into South Korea's culture more easily, it is preferable for NESTs to set aside their Western values and avoid dwelling on issues related to xenophobia, substandard housing, and weak educational curriculums. Instead, they should focus on work issues, such as ways for them to constructively contribute to a new place of employment and the importance of maintaining overall professionalism at work and at play. By demonstrating care and empathy for students, challenging him/her self to give a great classroom and investing overtime hours at work, an NEST assures his/her professional credentials and will come to be perceived as a valuable employee. As well, teaching overseas is a unique opportunity to further refine one's people and teaching skills and to directly impress on the lives of students, by setting for them examples of hard-work, diligence and integrity. One day, students may choose to become responsible and contributing members of society and/or bring about cultural and/or economic change and direction to their nation in part because of NESTs' good influence.

3) The Accommodation

Most South Korean employers provide living accommodations to their NESTs. Those who don't, give a supplementary allowance to cover the monthly cost of a lodging which the NEST is responsible for finding on his/her own. Questions one might possibly ask a recruiter or an employer in this regard include: a) Is a free lodging provided as part of the contractual agreement? If yes, where is it located...nearby the school? b) In a modern or an old facility?; c) Will it be a shared or an unshared living situation? If shared, with how many other NESTs? Their ages, genders and cultural backgrounds? d) Is the apartment furnished, semi-furnished or non-furnished?; e) Well heated with hot running water?; f)What is the monthly utilities fee?; g) Is there a TV? If yes, with foreign and/or English channels? h) Is there a washer and dryer in the building?; i) A fan or an air conditioner?; j) A grocery store and/or a food market, nearby?; and k) Is it easily accessible by public transportation? etc. The following is one of the posts on the accommodation.

"*My apartment is big, and fairly comfortable. When I arrived it was furnished with all the basics. Last December, the boiler gave out on what had to be the coldest day of the year. My director, very much to his credit, had someone out to*

replace it within 24 hours. My apartment is not close to where I work however. The director told me this when he hired me, but he seriously underestimated the distance. He also neglected to mention that it's far from everything else too. All I have around me are factories, fields, and a couple of gas stations. On the up side it's quiet, and I have a fantastic view" (quoted from one of postings from "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal")

4) Colleges and Universities

One of the changes in how English is taught in Korean universities during the past 20 years is the addition of numerous NESTs to almost every university and college teaching staff. It is rather common knowledge that there have been a number of accompanying problems to this addition. Some of these problems are perceived to arise from language difficulties, others from cultural differences, while still others may originate in administrative management philosophies or other areas (Ahn & Dickey, 1999). Many students hope to partake in lectures taught by NESTs, and many universities are also willing to open additional courses for these students. However, in order for lectures to be most effective, NESTs need to be appropriately trained or qualified teachers in order to successfully educate their students. Furthermore, NESTs need to constantly review their teaching styles and strategies to allow for professional development and ensure an improvement in their teaching methodology (Roh, 2006). If NESTs are considering working at a postsecondary institute, find out: a) about the minimum hours per week teachers are required to spend in the office and if these are paid hours or not; b) if an NEST will be expected to teach children's classes in addition to regular class schedule; c) if there is a contractual limit on the number of overtime hours an NEST may choose to work; d) about the number of weeks of paid vacation per semester and, if NESTs will be requested to teach under supplementary contracts at that time. One of the NESTs who worked at a camp operated by the college reported this response.

"*The program, unfortunately, is not much to speak of. The academy has tons of resources, but the curriculum is loosely structured at best. The individual teachers are all friendly, but do not communicate or coordinate very well with each other, or with me. This is the most frustrating aspect of my job. Discipline is a problem in some classes, and I do sometimes feel like more of a babysitter than a teacher, particularly with the younger children. Having said that, I adore my kids, even the ones who drive me bonkers. I'm not a natural with kids believe me, but occasionally we have some fantastic moments when they really get what*

> *I'm trying to teach, and occasionally we have some great moments where I lay my lesson aside and we just have fun. There are no cameras in the classroom. The director does not interrupt my classes to yell at me (or yell at me at all for that matter) and I have not had any problems with the mothers of my students.*" (quoted from one of postings from "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal")

5) Community Integration

Widdowson (1992) raises the issue of NESTs' monolingual status and worries about their self-satisfaction with security in their native language, assuming that everybody wants to speak English and NESTs do not need to learn other languages or even other cultures. This might contribute to the NESTs isolating themselves from other cultures and English language learners. NESTs often make the mistake of thinking that the power of English in the world means that they do not have to learn another language. There are two big disadvantages in this era of globalization; one is not knowing English if someone is not a native English speaker, and the other is being monolingual if someone is an English speaker (Burgess, 2004, p.1). Chin (2002) also states that studying and showing knowledge of the host language and culture are worthwhile. To counter the effects of culture shock and isolation, the NESTs visiting South Korea for the first time should consider immersing themselves rapidly into the culture. This can more easily be achieved by maintaining a positive attitude towards cultural adaptation and by striving to learn the language (Hangul). South Koreans on average are friendly and helpful people, so there are many opportunities to practice speaking Korean and to learn to develop new friendship. As well, diplomacy and politeness go a long way in Korea. And, it is recommended to carry around at all times pocket-size English-Korean and Korean-English dictionaries, communication tools can be well worth the investment.

2. Tips for Those Granting Employment

1) Weak Areas

On "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal," NESTs often complain extensively about working conditions in South Korea. The following are areas which contribute directly to employees' dissatisfaction and turnover: a) disorganized educational systems lacking in regulated directives, managements and policies b) substandard educational facilities and poor subsidized housing facilities c) employers with little interest in educational matters; d) attitudes of indifference and antipathy by unilingual Korean staff

towards foreign faculty d) locally produced textbooks devoid of pictures and filled with grammar errors; e) teaching materials chosen with little input from foreign instructors; f) erratic work schedules, heavy workloads, oversized classes and unstructured curriculum; g) nonexistent staff meetings (no time to express students' problems, difficulties or attitudes), no talks following the observation of classes, lack of planning, communication issues and corruption; h) delayed monthly salary payments, denied medical coverage and insufficient information on taxes procedure; i) denials and violations of the Korean Labor Laws and Statutory Regulations; j) dismissals without due cause or warning; and, k) harassment of employees who gave proper notice before quitting, discouraging other employees from doing the same.

2) Ways to Improve

A main factor contributing to the good fortune of NESTs seeking employment in South Korea by means of a recruiter, has to do with the reliability of a recruiter to secure honest employment for his clients. As well, school administrators and Korean faculty can improve the living and working conditions of their foreign teachers by: a) honoring written work contracts; b) upgrading curriculum, teaching and course materials; c) acquiring a resources library and updating it periodically; d) providing a training period followed by bi-monthly workshops; d) encouraging the start up of a teachers' network aimed at sharing teaching tips; e) holding regular staff meetings; f) having bilingual Korean staff members act as mediators on foreign teachers' issues; g) fostering good relationships amongst supervisors and coworkers; h) reminding Korean staff to remain sensitive to the needs and suggestions of foreign instructors; i) having degree verification system; and, j) creating more satisfactory work schedules for foreign teachers.

In addition, a special training center, which aims to prepare newly hired NESTs to become familiar with the educational system of English instruction, to successfully integrate into Korean society, and to develop an understanding of Korean culture, needs to be established. However, Seoul Metropolitan and Provincial Office of Education (2007) provided a five day orientation schedule (no pre-departure orientation) of lecture, activities, and video workshops for the newcomers. Techniques required to teach Korean EFL learners are of overriding importance. Many E-2 visa holders come to Korea with little experience in the educational field, so it has been difficult to get them to fit in as actual teachers. The following is one of remarks on professional development made by an NEST.

> "*Many foreign teachers only come to Korea for a short time. They are young and soon return to their home countries to continue with their life. Some of the*

foreign teachers here in Korea have made this our home. We wish to become better teachers. There are opportunities for Korean teachers to improve their skills and knowledge with additional teachers' training and professional development. My question is why there are no opportunities for teachers' training and professional development for those teachers who are remain in Korea and continue to teach. Even having workshops and conferences on a quarterly or even a semi annual basis would give us the chance to learn from each other and improve our skills and teaching methods and abilities. One would think that the goal of the provincial Education office would be to offer the best teachers and education that it could to the students of the province. Increased professional development would certainly go a long way to improve the quality of both teachers and teaching. If you only needed foreign teachers for listening pronunciation instead of high quality instruction then wouldn't tape players and CD players be a more economical approach?" (quoted from one of postings from "Dave's ESL Café's Job Information Journal")

V. CONCLUSION

The new government is pushing to overhaul English education as part of its efforts to bolster the country's global competitiveness. One of its plans to revamp how English is taught at schools is to invite as many NESTs as the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology can. However, the excessive preference towards native teachers causes a lot of social problems including child abuse and diploma forgery. We often read news articles reporting that in elementary and secondary Korean schools there are many unqualified native speaker teachers who have no proper educational and vocational background for teaching English as a foreign language. In relation to these recent social problems, the Korean Ministry of Justice announced that it would implement a regulation that requires any foreigners wishing to teach in Korea to submit a criminal background check and a medical check, and to undergo an interview at the Korean consular in their home town (Kerry, 2007).

In this context, the primary goals of this study were: a) to investigate NESTs' perceptions about living and working in South Korea, and b) to increase the awareness of recruiters and employers in regards to the needs of their foreign employees. As well, lists of questions for NESTs to ask potential employers and recruiters when conducting a job search were developed, along with a list of conditions in need of improvement at language institutes, colleges and universities throughout South Korea.

Without a doubt, working overseas as an EFL instructor is a highly rewarding career on many levels. Along with increasing a person's sensitivity level to other cultures, helping him/her gain a greater sense of appreciation for his/her own culture, it may bring about opportunities for professional advancement. The NESTs who maintain a flexible mind set, have an innate capacity to adapt and strive in new environments, are creative, people-oriented, maintain a positive attitude and who have a great a capacity for hard work, have several of the qualities necessary for living and working abroad. It is sincerely hoped that this study will have proven itself to be useful to those NESTs considering becoming employed in South Korea.

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Received in July, 2008
Reviewed in August, 2008
Revised version received in September, 2008